

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 024994 TOSEC 020001

THE FOLLOWING MESSAGE SENT TO SECSTATE INFO BONN
BUSSELS COPENHAGEN DUBLIN LONDON PARIS ROME THE HAGUE
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QUOTE CONFIDENTIAL LUXEMBOURG 0109

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TAGS: UN, LU

SUBJ: ORGANIZING FOR MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY--SOME THOUGHTS
OF PRIME MINISTER THRON

REF: STATE 303856, 1975

SUMMARY: IN CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM ON
JANUARY 27, PRIME MINISTER THORN PROVIDED SOME REFLECTIONS
ON HIS EXPERIENCE AS PRESIDENT OF THE 30TH UNGA. HE BELIEVES
THE SO-CALLED AUTOMATIC MAJORITY AGAINST THE U.S. AND THE
WEST IN THE UN IS A GOOD DEAL MORE FRAGILE THAN MANY BELIEVE
AND SEES OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREATER WESTERN INFLUENCE. HOWEVER,
THE WEST MUST VASTLY IMPROVE ITS ABILITY TO ANTICIPATE ISSUES,
TO DEVELOP COORDINATED POSITIONS AND TO MAKE ITS INFLUENCE
FELT. HE RECOMMENDS A CONTINUOUS DIALOGUE ON UN AFFAIRS
BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES IN NEW YORK,
IN NATO, IN US/EC POLITICAL CONTACTS AND BILATERALLY.
THORN COMMENTED THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN OFFICE
FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT IS A STEP
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IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. A FIRM SUPPORTER OF THE PRIN-

CIPLES UNDERLYING AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S TACTICS, THORN BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE WAKE OF THE STORMY 30TH UNGA THE TIME HAS COME FOR A SHIFT IN STYLE IN THE WEST'S DEALINGS WITH THE THIRD WORLD AT THE UN. END SUMMARY.

1. THORN SAID HE HAS BECOME A FANATIC IN PREACHING THE NEED FOR BETTER WESTERN COORDINATION ON UN POLICY AND TACTICS. THE ANGOLAN AND SAHARA VOTES PROVE CONCLUSIVELY, IF PROOF WERE NEEDED, THAT THE THIRD WORLD IS FAR FROM A MONOLITHIC BLOC. WHERE LDCS' REAL INTERESTS ARE AT STAKE, THEY ARE CAPABLE OF ACTING RESPONSIBLY. THE DIFFICULTY IS THAT THEY OFTEN DO NOT PERCEIVE THE IMPORTANCE FOR THEMSELVES OF A GIVEN ISSUE AT AN EARLY STAGE IN ITS CONSIDERATION, AND THEIR POSITIONS BECOME FROZEN AND ALL BUT IMPERVIOUS TO WESTERN INFLUENCE. HERE THE QUESTION OF TIMING IS ALL IMPORTANT. AFTER THE GROUP OF 77 HAS MET, BARGAINED, BARTERED AND COMPROMISED, IT IS TOO LATE FOR WESTERN LOBBYING. AFTER AN ISSUE GOES THROUGH THE COMMITTEE STAGE AT THE UN, CHANCES OF INFLUENCING THE AVERAGE DELEGATE'S POSITION DROPS TO NEAR ZERO.

2. IN THORN'S VIEW, THEREFORE, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT THE WESTERN INDUSTRIALIZED NATIONS CONSULT ON UN ISSUES MORE FREQUENTLY, MORE INTENSIVELY AND ON A MORE TIMELY BASIS. NEW YORK IS AN OBVIOUS FORUM FOR STEPPED-UP CONSULTATIONS, BUT THORN WOULD NOT EXCLUDE OTHER AVENUES FOR EXCHANGES, SUCH AS NATO, THE US/EC POLITICAL DIALOGUE AND BILATERAL CONTACTS. HE STRESSED AGAIN THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMING. TO MAKE ANY IMPACT WITHIN THE EC, THORN SAID A MINIMUM OF 48 HOURS IS NEEDED, IN NATO IT IS A WEEK AND IN THE UN 2-3 WEEKS. OBVIOUSLY, COORDINATION SHOULD NOT BE LEFT TO THE LAST MINUTE, BUT MORE FUNDAMENTALLY THORN WOULD LIKE TO SEE A PROCESS OF CONSULTATIONS ESTABLISHED WHICH WOULD PERMIT THE WEST TO REGAIN THE INITIATIVE IN SHAPING ISSUES. THIS WOULD REQUIRE BETTER ANALYSIS OF LONG-RANGE PROBLEMS AND BETTER COORDINATION ON POLICY AND TACTICS. HE REGARDS THE CREATION OF A SPECIAL OFFICE

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FOR MULTILATERAL AFFAIRS IN THE DEPARTMENT AS A SIGN THAT THE U.S. ALSO RECOGNIZES THE NEED FOR SUCH ANALYSIS AND COORDINATION.

3. IN THORN'S VIEW, CONSULTATION SHOULD NOT BECOME TOO STRUCTURED. HE SEES IMPORTANT TACTICAL ADVANTAGES IN EXPLOITING THE VARIOUS BILATERAL TIES BETWEEN WESTERN AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES. FOR EXAMPLE,

SWEDEN OR CANADA MIGHT BE BETTER ABLE THAN OTHERS TO EXERT INFLUENCE ON CERTAIN ISSUES. THROUGH LOW-PROFILE CONSULTATIONS THEY MIGHT BE INDUCED TO CARRY A SUBSTANTIAL PART OF THE LOBBYING LOAD. BUT THE WEST MUST AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF A BLOC ACTING UNDER U.S. LEADERSHIP FOR SUCH STRATEGY TO WORK.

4. THORN SAID HIS ANALYSIS IN THIS REGARD TAKES INTO ACCOUNT A PERVASIVE, KNEE-JERK, ANTI-AMERICANISM AT THE UN. HE SAID IT IS SAD BUT TRUE THAT HE FOUND THAT MANY NONALIGNED DELEGATES REGARD A "SAFE" VOTE, IN TERMS OF THEIR SENSE OF REGIONAL AND IDEOLOGICAL SOLIDARITY, AS A VOTE AGAINST THE U.S. ON ALMOST ANY ISSUE. THORN RECOGNIZES THE HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BASIS OF SUCH ATTITUDES AND IS WELL AWARE THAT BETTER PUBLIC RELATIONS ALONE IS NOT A PANACEA. HE ARGUES NONETHELESS THAT MANY THIRD WORLD PERM REPS ARE MORE OFTEN THAN NOT OUT OF TOUCH WITH THEIR CAPITALS AND MORE OR LESS ON THEIR OWN. MOREOVER, HE BELIEVES THAT MANY LDC REPS ARE DEEPLY AFFECTED BY A SORT OF PERMANENT CULTURAL SHOCK THAT A PROLONGED STAY IN NEW YORK CITY APPARENTLY CAN PRODUCE. MORE PERSONAL ATTENTION FROM WESTERN, AND PARTICULARLY U.S. OFFICIALS, COULD HAVE SURPRISINGLY POSITIVE RESULTS IN THORN'S VIEW.

5. THIS REFLECTION BROUGHT THORN TO A POINT HE SAID HE HOPED AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN WOULD NOT REGARD AS CRITICISM. HE SAID HE FULLY SUPPORTED AMBASSADOR MOYNIHAN'S STIFF RESISTANCE TO THIRD WORLD RHETORICAL EXCESSES, AND HE HAS NO DOUBT THAT THE TACTIC WAS EFFECTIVE. THE FACT THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL FIGHT BACK HAS SUNK IN, AND IT IS CLEAR TO MOST THIRD WORLD NATIONS THAT THE DAYS OF EXPLOITING WITH UTTER IMPUNITY A GOLIATH COMPLEX

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ON THE PART OF THE U.S. AND A COLONIAL GUILT COMPLEX ON THE PART OF THE WESTERN EUROPEANS ARE OVER. BUT NOW THAT THE POINT HAS BEEN MADE AND MADE EFFECTIVELY, THORN BELIEVES THAT THE TIME IS RIGHT FOR A SHIFT IN THE STYLE BUT NOT THE SUBSTANCE OF RELATIONS WITH THE NONALIGNED IN THE UN. IF THE UNGA IS REALLY TO BE TREATED AS A SERIOUS DELIBERATING BODY WITH MAJORITY PREROGATIVES AND MINORITY RIGHTS, HE FEELS THE WEST SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN INSISTING ON THE NORMAL COURTESIES AND AMENITIES OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE. HE FEELS THAT WITH THE BLOC OF 77 IN FLUX, IF NOT IN DOWNRIGHT DISSOLUTION, THE TIME HAS COME TO PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON THE CARROT THAN THE STICK. THORN BELIEVES THE U.S. SHOULD TAKE THE LEAD IN DEVELOPING A NEW STYLE AND SEES THIS AS AN APPROPRIATE TOPIC FOR FRANK CONSULTATIONS AMONG

THE UNITED STATES AND ITS ALLIES.

6. SHIFTING TO MORE GENERAL REFLECTIONS ON HIS UN EXPERIENCES, THORN SAID HE WAS STRUCK BY THE UN'S FAILURE TO PLAY ONE OF ITS IMPORTANT ROLES. OBVIOUSLY, THE ASSEMBLY REMAINS THE ONLY FORUM WHERE EVERY NATION HAS A CHANCE TO MAKE ITS VOICE HEARD, AND HE REGARDS THIS AS AN IMPORTANT SAFETY VALVE FOR THE SMALLER NATIONS. BUT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE SHOULD BE THE UNGA'S ROLE AS A PLACE OF CONTACT FOR LEADERS WHO SEE EACH OTHER RARELY IF AT ALL. BECAUSE OF THE DRAWN-OUT RITUALS THAT HAVE DEVELOPED AROUND THE OPENING OF GENERAL ASSEMBLY DEBATE, IMPORTANT LEADERS SIMPLY DO NOT HAVE THE TIME TO WAIT IN NEW YORK FOR THEIR COUNTER-PARTS ARRIVAL AND TIME TO SPEAK. HE FAVORS PROCEDURAL REFORMS WHICH WOULD SHORTEN CEREMONIAL INTERVENTIONS AND LEAVE MORE TIME FOR HIGH-LEVEL CONTACTS. THERE IS NO NEED, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR THE SPOKESMAN OF EVERY STATE TO CONGRATULATE THE OUTGOING UNGA PRESIDENT AND WELCOME IN THE NEW. FOR THE LIKE, HE HOPES THAT REGIONAL GROUP SPOKESMEN CAN PLAY A LARGER ROLE. ALSO AS IN ANY LARGE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, ISSUES CAN ONLY BE DEALT WITH BY RELATIVELY SMALL GROUPS, AND HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE COMMITTEES' WORK AS THE MOST IMPORTANT STAGE OF THE UNGA PROCESS. FARKAS UNQUOTE
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